Behavior Break: Strategies for Giving Effective Demands

- Use a calm, neutral tone.
- State what you want the student to do.
  - Avoid "yes/no" questions.
  - Avoid adding "ok?" to the end of a demand.
- Deliver the demand and move away.
- Embed Choice
  - Provide discrete choice options.
  - Provide only appropriate choice options. Each choice option allows the student to comply with the demand.
  - Include choice in the initial demand.
- Provide a Rationale
  - Explain "why" you want the student to do something before asking them to do it.
- Use Declarative Language
  - Verbalize your thoughts and/or describe the situation.
  - This allows the student to decide what to do next or how to solve the problem.
- Preview the Demand
  - Warn a student that a demand is coming some time before delivering the demand.
- Deliver Demands Indirectly
  - Pass the student a note (or other visual support) that states the demand.
  - Use a nonverbal cue or signal to deliver the demand.
  - Provide behavior-specific praise to peers who are engaging in the behavior you want your target student to engage in.
- Deliver Demands Privately
  - Go to the student and deliver the demand where only the student can hear it.
  - Deliver the demand in a private setting, such as the hallway.
- Switch Adults
  - When a student does not comply with a demand, have an adult other than the adult who gave the initial demand follow up with the student to redirect/repeat the demand.

References:

Minihan, J. & Rappaport, N. (2015). *The Behavior Code: A Practical Guide to Understanding and Teaching the Most Challenging Students.* Harvard Education Press, Cambridge, MA.

Minihan, J. (2015). *The Behavior Code Companion: Strategies, Tools, and Interventions for Supporting Students with Anxiety-Related or Oppositional Behaviors.* Harvard Education Press, Cambridge, MA.